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Chairman:	Mr. Balarezo	(Peru)
later:	Mr. Ramadan (Vice-Chairman)	(Lebanon)
later:	Mr. Balarezo	(Peru)

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04-59135 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 9.45 a.m.

Agenda item 90: Operational activities for development (A/59/115)

(a) Operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/59/135)

(b) Triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/59/3 (chap. I), A/59/84-E/2004/53, A/59/85-E/2004/68, A/59/386 and A/59/387)

1. **Mr. Civili** (Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) introduced the reports of the Secretary-General on comprehensive statistical data on operational activities for development for 2002 (A/59/84-E/2002/53); comprehensive statistical data on operational activities for development for 2003 (A/59/386); triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/59/85-E/2004/68); and on triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system: conclusions and recommendations (A/59/387).

2. During the previous week's dialogue on the triennial comprehensive policy review, the United Nations system and Member States had shared a greater sense of urgency about how to achieve field-level coherence and to orient United Nations development cooperation towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. There was a keener awareness of the magnitude of demands for development cooperation and for the system to work at full capacity to meet them. The dialogue had also given a good sense of how complex it was to articulate and operationalize responses. Greater cost-effectiveness and coherence, the objectives driving reform, were increasingly seen as instruments to maximize results, rather than ends in themselves. In that regard, the plans and priorities of individual countries were the basic benchmark against which coherence and effectiveness must be defined and measured.

3. The goal of harnessing all capacities available in the system entailed not only ensuring that the country benefited from all that the system had to offer but also ensuring that capacities in all the sectors that were available in the system and corresponded to key national priorities were effectively placed at the disposal of the country, regardless of whether or not the organization concerned was a resident agency. Under that approach, national ownership was both the starting point and a key objective of the effort to enhance system-wide coordination. In that regard, the United Nations Resident Coordinators' role was indispensable in facilitating dialogue with Governments and supporting national coordination, which, in turn, was a key ingredient of national leadership and ownership.

4. There was also growing awareness of the critical relationship between poverty reduction strategy papers, the United Nations development assistance frameworks and other country-level programming instruments. Turning to resources, he noted, inter alia, that the move from a supply-driven to a demand-driven approach to United Nations development cooperation needed to be accompanied by a fundamental reflection on the adequacy of resources in relation to actual demand. Such a reflection must encompass basic modalities of funding. That issue must be tackled in an open, deliberate way across the programmes and funds and other organizations of the United Nations system.

5. *Mr. Ramadan (Lebanon), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

6. **Ms. Heyzer** (Executive Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)), introducing the report on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (A/59/135), said that a number of recent assessments of women's empowerment and gender equality had shown mixed results. Indeed, while gender equality policies and action plans had been adopted by more than 129 countries and legislation had been passed to strengthen women's rights to land and property, increase their political representation and penalize gender-based violence, laws, policies and programmes often failed to lead to action. When gender equality was made a cross-cutting issue, it often became invisible, as did the effect of development policies on women and their role in shaping them. Moreover, gender experts within the United Nations often lacked the status, time, resources and capacity to influence decision-making and support technical areas. Finally, in order to strengthen accountability and turn words into action, the United Nations needed to take a strong and coherent approach in support of implementation of

the national priorities on gender equality articulated in many national plans and laws.

7. Greater accountability for delivering on gender equality commitments required better tools. UNIFEM gave high priority to supporting countries in their efforts to produce, use and build sustainable capacity in sex-disaggregated data. Gender-responsive budgeting was also a high priority. Indeed, UNIFEM was supporting gender-responsive budgeting initiatives in every region. What had become clear from the progress achieved was that in order to change the realities of women's everyday lives, laws and policies must be implemented and attitudes and practices must change. For that to happen, sustained partnerships, monitoring and resources, especially at the national and regional levels, were essential; agencies on the ground must also share good practices.

8. Within the United Nations system, UNIFEM was chairing a task force of gender equality specialists from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Division for the Advancement of Women. The task force had concluded that the Organization needed to develop a coherent set of performance indicators on gender equality for United Nations country teams, to ensure that those working on gender equality had seniority, resources and capacity, to make better use of existing gender equality expertise, and to more effectively position UNIFEM and ensure that it had adequate resources.

Question-and-answer session

9. **The Chairman** asked what different financing options were available in efforts aimed at guaranteeing a predictable flow of resources for operational activities for development.

10. **Mr. Civili** (Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) referred to a report on the financing of operational activities for development that the Secretary-General had submitted two years previously to the Economic and Social Council as well as to the Monterrey Consensus on financing for development. The issue should be addressed in its totality, account being taken of all the options available, policies in individual countries and what was happening in individual funds and programmes. The idea was to move from the supply-driven approach to the demand-driven approach.

11. **Ms. Rivington** (Canada) asked how specialized agencies or non-resident agencies without the will or the capacity to establish a country or regional presence could participate more effectively in the process at the country level.

12 **Mr. Essel** (Ghana) wanted to know how countries with differing circumstances and levels of development related to the overall global Millennium Development Goals and how the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions, and the multilateral and bilateral systems fitted into the picture.

13. **Mr. Kogda** (Burkina Faso) asked what measures were being taken to ensure that non-resident organizations were able to act in the field and, given the new orientation, how funding and payments could be standardized.

14. **Mr. Civili** (Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), replying to the question raised by Canada, said that the idea was not to encourage more agencies to have offices in the field, but rather to enhance coordination between existing field offices. Every effort should be made to be responsive to the needs and requirements of countries. The structure of field offices was determined by many factors, including the different approaches to centralization versus decentralization and availability of resources. The resident country team and the resident coordinator should make it a priority to ensure that all the capacities of the system were geared towards responding to country requirements. Non-resident agencies, for their part, should realize that their contribution would be part of a broader effort. If that mindset prevailed at the country level and among the agencies, the answers would be many and would come naturally. Under an agreement between the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and UNDP, for example, an expert from UNIDO would be placed at the disposal of UNDP Resident Coordinators. Further work was needed to explore the possibilities of information and communication technologies (ICT) as an instrument of coordination. The issue was an important one, considering that the key dimensions of development plans, from trade to many aspects of the productive sector, were covered almost exclusively by agencies that did not have offices in the field.

15. **Mr. Khan** (Director, Division for ECOSOC Support and Coordination), replying to the questions raised by Ghana, said that the United Nations system of cooperation could and had assisted individual developing countries to translate the Millennium Development Goals to their own circumstances, priorities and conditions. That was one of the key functions of the United Nations development cooperation system. Nevertheless, the countries' leadership and ownership of the agenda must be clearly established. The entire United Nations system needed to be brought in around the countries' own priorities and strategies based on the Millennium Development Goals. The report of the Secretary-General on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system: conclusions and recommendations (A/59/387) drew attention to that element, particularly in the first set of recommendations, in paragraph 17 (a) and (d).

16. The other dimension of the question was that of coordination between the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, and the bilateral systems. There again, the most important element was the leadership and ownership of the country concerned. A number of important instruments were also available to the system, such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions, the countries themselves and bilateral agencies should base their programmes on the Millennium Development Goals. A coherent, system-wide, country-level approach was needed that was responsive to national priorities and aligned with national strategies. If that could be achieved, and if the bilateral donors would participate, there could be a fundamental shift in the way that development cooperation was implemented at the country level.

17. With regard to the question raised by Burkina Faso concerning the allocation of resources, he said that resources could be pooled, and the evaluation and monitoring processes could bring out elements that needed to be addressed. Thus, a system of results and rewards could be helpful as a basis for further allocation of resources.

18. **Ms. Heyzer** (Executive Director, UNIFEM), referring to the question on non-resident agencies and possible alternatives, said that the issue was how the regional centres could become technical centres that could support country teams. The other issue to look at was that of sharing staff and using available information technology to create knowledge networks so as to deliver expertise at the time when it was required. Thus, non-resident organizations would not need to have a permanent presence in the field but could be present when needed. In exploring that possibility, they should also work on developing exit strategies.

19. With regard to gender mainstreaming in poverty reduction strategies, she stressed the importance of working to alleviate or remove barriers to the generation of wealth, such as limits on land ownership, access to water and access to roads, among others. It was important to be able to map the geography of poverty, especially of feminized poverty, to identify the growth sectors in which women were involved and to improve market access for women producers, so that they did not engage only in the production of low-value goods and services. Poverty reduction strategies (PRSPs) should be linked to the trade agenda. Efforts should also be made to assist women in countries coming out of conflict or on the verge of conflict and to ensure that the PRSPs addressed the root causes of conflict in terms of exclusion and inequality.

20. *Mr. Balarezo (Peru) resumed the Chair.*

21. **Mr. Al-Nasser** (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the measures that were being taken by the United Nations system to improve its organization and planning at the country level should be based on national development agendas and be geared to assisting developing countries in their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed goals through their national strategies. Ownership should be an objective of development assistance; national capacities to design and implement endogenous development policies needed to be enhanced and supported by United Nations field operations.

22. The Group of 77 and China fully shared the concerns and recommendations of the Secretary-General on the need to ensure predictable, stable and adequate funding for United Nations development assistance. New funding mechanisms should be explored, and harmonization and simplification measures should be enhanced. However, it was important to stress that the quality and not only the quantity of resources determined the impact of operational activities in the field. Multi-year core

budgets, rather than earmarked resources, should be the main financing instruments of multilateral development cooperation, so as to ensure predictable planning and a coherent response to multilaterally agreed goals. Flexibility and pragmatism should guide further progress in ensuring the role of United Nations entities according to each country's needs; it was important to facilitate the substantive participation of non-resident entities in country-level operations as required by the national development agendas.

23. Gender equality and gender mainstreaming needed to be integrated into the country programmes as one of the main goals of United Nations assistance. The Organization's support for countries in transition from crisis to development required an accurate articulation of peacebuilding, conflict prevention and post-conflict assistance. Such assistance should not be limited to meeting short-term needs; the assistance required during the recovery phase entailed different instruments and additional funding. The increasing relevance of regional and subregional arrangements should be taken into account in the design of multilateral development assistance, particularly in the case of transboundary initiatives. The regional dimension of development cooperation should also be taken into account in inter-agency arrangements within the United Nations system. The deepening of South-South cooperation should be reflected in development activities and should be supported through networking and exchanges not only among developing countries but also in cooperation with other donor partners.

24. Effectiveness and credibility depended on concrete development results. One basic principle was to ensure an appropriate assessment of United Nations assistance based on development benchmarks agreed with the recipient country. The monitoring and evaluation functions of individual organizations as well as of the system as a whole should be given high priority. Another prerequisite was to ensure that development funds were used most efficiently and were devoted to the core function of supporting development activities. Every effort should be made to minimize non-development expenditures.

25. The Group of 77 and China supported the recommendations included in the report of the Secretary-General on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system: conclusions and recommendations (A/59/387). However, he would like to elaborate on the position of the Group on some of those recommendations. In particular, it wished to emphasize the key role played by the Resident Coordinator and by UNDP, the importance of the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and UNDAF and the monitoring role of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). The Resident Coordinators and the United Nations country teams should use various means, such as networking, shared experts and regular contacts among agencies, to facilitate the participation in United Nations operations of entities that did not have a country presence. Similarly, non-resident entities should explore and implement practical ways of collaborating within the system so as to ensure that their knowledge and expertise was used in the most appropriate and efficient manner.

26. The recommendations of the Secretary-General indicated that planning done through the CCA/UNDAF process should be supportive of national plans and poverty reduction strategies. However, it was not clear how the financial and technical assistance provided by the Bretton Woods institutions, including the PRSPs would interact with the CCAs and UNDAFs. It was important to ensure coherence between all the different policy components and country ownership of those policy components.

27. The relevance and effectiveness of the CCAs and UNDAFs would remain limited if the assistance provided by the Bretton Woods institutions was not properly articulated with the assistance provided by the rest of the United Nations system. In general, the CCA/UNDAF process was focused mainly on humanitarian, social, environmental and microeconomic domestic issues, while macroeconomic policies such as finance and trade, as well as poverty reduction measures, were addressed through the PRSPs and therefore linked to the assistance of the Bretton Woods institutions. That was an artificial segmentation of the development agenda, and it was for each developing country to decide how to ensure coherence between those different instruments in accordance with its own needs. In the same context it was necessary to examine the role of the assistance provided by the World Trade Organization (WTO) in the area of international trade rules. The report of the Secretary-General correctly called for inter-agency partnerships and knowledge networks, including for non-resident entities, and that recommendation should also encompass the Bretton Woods institutions. Those inter-

agency arrangements should be flexible and pragmatic and aimed at maximizing the benefits of the diverse expertise existing in the United Nations family.

28. As for the recommendation on the funding of United Nations field operations, the Economic and Social Council should establish an intergovernmental working group to examine the predictability, stability and adequacy of the funding of United Nations development operations, as well as new and alternative funding mechanisms. It should also undertake, on a regular basis, a comprehensive review of the trends and perspectives of the financial resources of United Nations system development cooperation as compared to other forms of international development assistance. In the light of the consensus regarding the need for coherence in the pursuit of development objectives, donor partners had to examine carefully whether their approaches to funding with regard to United Nations system operational activities, the Bretton Woods institutions and other bilateral initiatives were consistent with the goals of coherence, coordination and cost-effectiveness.

29. It was equally important to make progress in the management of United Nations field operations. Decentralization, delegation of authority, simplification of financial regulations, and flexible arrangements regarding personnel, shared services and premises needed to be considered in the light of effectiveness and results. Greater inter-agency collaboration in the field as well as at Headquarters was a priority. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and UNDG should ensure the involvement and inclusion of all United Nations entities in field operations, including the non-resident entities.

30. Development was and would continue to be one of the main responsibilities of the multilateral system. Collective security had two faces — the security component and the economic component — and the United Nations and all its Member States had to address both with equal attention. Efforts to prevent conflicts were meaningless if the economic roots of those conflicts were not addressed. It was the common interest of all to ensure that development was at the top of multilateral efforts and that economic collective security was a top priority of multilateralism.

31. **Mr. van den Berg** (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the candidate countries Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey, the countries of the stabilization and association process and the potential candidates Albania and Serbia and Montenegro, said that the resolution for adoption during the current session on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system should underline the importance of the overarching framework of the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals and invite countries to focus nationally owned, nationally driven development strategies on the 2015 development agenda, customizing development targets according to their specific realities and ambitions.

32. The environment of international aid was changing rapidly. Based on the Monterrey Consensus, resources for development could be expected to increase in the years to come. Many providers of international assistance for development had delegated decision-making on funding to the decentralized level. The trend in funding modalities was a stronger emphasis on budget and sector programme support. The United Nations should position itself strategically in that dynamic environment by focusing on what it did best: providing technical assistance and building national capacities, including local capacities, to manage the new forms of support, and implementing concrete activities that were strategically linked to national poverty reduction strategies. The new aid modalities could give the United Nations greater leverage on how resources were used in the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals.

33. Lack of adequate funding in the United Nations development system did not justify failure to perform with utmost efficiency and effectiveness within the current funding framework. To attract resources for its programmes, the system needed to pursue its reform agenda vigorously, reducing fragmentation and avoiding competition, duplication and overlap. There should be greater simplification and harmonization, with clear targets and deadlines for the next three years. There had to be a common, coherent, demand-driven and strategic programming approach focused on the Millennium Development Goals for all United Nations operations for development. That approach had to be harmonized and coordinated with other partners and in line with the national processes and priorities. The United Nations could not be expected to perform the tasks with which it was entrusted without an

adequate, secure and predictable funding base. Reform of the United Nations system should be accompanied by a substantial and sustained increase of earmarked core funding for operational activities. The European Union would favour a dynamic process of consultation on how to achieve that objective. Funding modalities such as assessed, negotiated and voluntary contributions should be further analysed.

34. The European Union believed that both the CCA and the UNDAF should adapt their cycles to the existing national planning cycle. Common analysis should increasingly replace repetitive analysis of individual agencies. UNDAF should not be an aggregation of proposals or ongoing projects and programmes from individual agencies. Instead, consideration needed to be given to a coherent programming and monitoring framework and to the contribution of the United Nations country team in its entirety to the national poverty reduction strategy. The central question for that team and for non-resident agencies in preparing UNDAF should be to determine those national priorities and international efforts to which the United Nations system at country level could effectively contribute.

35. The European Union would welcome a clear recognition of the UNDAF and the UNDAF results matrix in the triennial comprehensive policy review as the strategic planning tool for determining the roles and responsibilities of the various United Nations agencies working at the country level, fostering a harmonized United Nations approach to the country-led poverty strategy. The European Union encouraged the evolution of the UNDAF from a common framework for agency programming to a common programming instrument. It should become a tool for the mobilization of resources. The European Union would welcome joint evaluations of the impact of the contribution of United Nations country teams towards attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. The triennial comprehensive policy review should consider the feasibility of establishing a joint executive board to discuss matters relating to the aggregate performance of the funds and programmes, particularly at the country level, such as the joint evaluation reports, the overall progress with simplification and harmonization and the quality and effectiveness of CCAs and UNDAFs.

36. Recognition of the role of UNDAF and the results matrix as the United Nations contribution to the Millennium Development Goals at the country level implied a different authority for the Resident Coordinator. In order for the United Nations country teams to deliver a coherent contribution to the national strategy for poverty eradication, especially the PSRP, the European Union believed that the resident coordinator system needed to be further strengthened by giving the resident coordinator a greater level of authority and clearer lines of accountability. Firstly, the resident coordinator should be able to ensure that the UNDAF was fully aligned with the national poverty reduction strategies. Secondly, he should be able to make sure that all United Nations partners aligned themselves fully with the priorities identified in the UNDAF results matrix, thereby ensuring a more harmonized programme. Finally, the resident coordinator should be mandated to monitor the results achieved.

37. UNDP was best placed to manage the resident coordinator system. In countries with large programmes or complex post-conflict situations, there should be a division of labour between the resident coordinator and the UNDP country director, which would give the resident coordinator the latitude and time more effectively to coordinate the United Nations country team and enable him to focus on effective management of joint programmes. The UNDP country director would focus on managing and raising resources for the UNDP country programme. Resident coordinators should have the necessary resources to fulfil their role effectively. Core costs should be met through contributions from the UNDP core budget, as was currently the case. In order to enhance ownership by other partners in the system, financial arrangements, including cost-sharing, between the agencies participating in the United Nations country team could be envisaged for the country coordination plan itself. The quality and commitment of senior management would be critical: the European Union welcomed the improvements made in the resident coordinator selection process to ensure that the most suitable people were chosen. Accountability of the system would be greatly enhanced through a common assessment by all members of the United Nations country team of the performance of resident coordinators.

38. The Millennium Development Goals could not be achieved without adequately addressing the gender dimensions in operational activities. It was essential

that there should be sufficient gender expertise in United Nations country teams to monitor the implementation of the national poverty reduction strategy and to mainstream gender in the results-based programming framework of the United Nations. The European Union called upon all organizations of the United Nations system to ensure that their designated gender specialists at the country, regional and global levels had the seniority, capacity and time effectively to support gender mainstreaming in country-level activities in all the sectors required. The European Union advocated making gender theme groups mandatory in all United Nations country teams, and it strongly supported the Secretary-General's recommendation to articulate a comprehensive, time-bound action plan for gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women. It welcomed the call in his report for the generation of sex-disaggregated statistics at the country level.

39. The European Union considered it vital in the transition from relief to development to ensure enhanced cooperation between the United Nations security, political and development actors. The United Nations needed to develop a coherent, cooperative and effective response to transition situations for the United Nations system as a whole. The inter-agency mission, currently in use in countries such as Afghanistan and the Sudan, and the joint assessment mission, should be used where appropriate. In the transition as well as the relief phase, capacity-building was an important element for national and local governments to assume their responsibilities. It was critical that the United Nations country teams should strengthen their cooperation in the nexus between humanitarian and development work in order to ensure a smooth transition at country level. The European Union welcomed the Security Council's request to the Secretary-General to develop an action plan, with time lines, for implementing its resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security across the United Nations system.

40. Progress in recent years had not been even, as not all partners in the United Nations development system seemed fully to have embraced the drive for coherence, simplification and harmonization. The challenge for the United Nations was to develop one consolidated, integrated and coordinated United Nations system response to the needs of developing countries, based on the comparative advantages of the partners in the United Nations country team and building on the normative capacity of the United Nations in general. To that end, the full United Nations system must evolve rapidly towards joint programming based on common strategies that engaged all its components, with agencies that had the most relevant contribution to make to national priorities playing leading roles in the country team according to their capacities. A strengthened resident coordinator system and a rationalized United Nations country presence were crucial in that regard. The triennial comprehensive policy review provided Member States with the opportunity to ensure a coherent and coordinated United Nations development system. A comprehensive and time-bound action plan, with monitorable targets, was an essential prerequisite for success in the next phase of the reform process.

41. The European Union believed that the current triennial comprehensive policy review should keep in mind the crucial importance of the United Nations development system for the coordinated and integrated follow-up process to implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, to be held in 2005. The Millennium Development Goals recognized that development was a large and complex task, and clearly shared responsibility between donors and partner countries was essential for meeting them.

42. **Mr. Stanislavov** (Russian Federation) said that in the run-up to the 2005 review of implementation of the Millennium Declaration it was necessary to set specific targets whose attainment would enable the United Nations operational activities system to play an increasingly important role in assisting countries to implement the Millennium Development Goals. The comparative advantages of operational activities should be fully used, particularly in terms of respecting the principles of national ownership, universality, neutrality and the voluntary nature of operational activities, as well as ensuring the substantive focus on the mandatory independence of the funds and programmes.

43. Implementation of the recommendations contained in General Assembly resolution 56/201 had enabled real progress to be made in achieving reforms through improving coordination and coherence and optimizing key parameters in the programming process. The reform agenda was to a significant extent designed to be implemented primarily by the UNDG Executive Committee agencies. Different parts of the

United Nations development system participated in the reform at different speeds, and the Russian Federation considered that significant opportunities for increasing the effectiveness of United Nations operational activities were chiefly to be created by more active involvement of the specialized agencies, regional commissions and other bodies in coordinated work at country level. Further reform measures should take equal account of the interests, priorities and specific features of the work of both UNDG Executive Committee agencies and other entities of the United Nations development system.

44. Further simplification and harmonization of the rules and procedures should lessen the diversity of requirements, and reduce the administrative and financial burden on the programme countries and the agencies themselves, without infringing on their independence. The harmonization process had its limits because of the differences between agencies in terms of mandates, business models and structures. Recent experience had shown that harmonization often led not to simplification but to further complication of rules and procedures, and the emphasis now had to be put on simplification. The effectiveness of harmonization from the point of view of its financial consequences needed to be assessed separately. Thus far, there had been an increase rather than a decrease in administrative expenditures.

45. The Russian Federation supported further measures to rationalize the modalities of the United Nations presence in recipient countries in terms of increased use of common premises and services. It also supported further improvement in the quality of the CCA and UNDAF, in whose preparation the Government should continue to play the leading role. The CCA/UNDAF process should rely on analytical work carried out at the national level and be less wasteful. The introduction of the UNDAF results matrix was a positive development. In countries with a low level of programme resources, the application of CCA/UNDAF was not always justified and should not be a precondition for those countries to cooperate with the United Nations development system.

46. Proposals to broaden the authority of resident coordinators in overseeing implementation of the UNDAF deserved serious and pragmatic consideration. Such a step should not adversely affect recipient Governments in their cooperation with individual agencies, nor should it create an additional layer of bureaucracy in bilateral contacts, leading to increased administrative expenditures at the country level.

47. Post-conflict recovery and development was one of the important issues in the triennial comprehensive policy review, and the Russian Federation supported the key role the United Nations was playing in resolving related problems. It was necessary to concentrate programmes and funds on the practical aspects of ensuring a coordinated and timely response at the country level to post-conflict situations. The priorities were: to provide a balanced combination of humanitarian and long-term assistance in accordance with country-specific needs, to discharge the United Nations coordination function and ensure the flexible application of coordination instruments, involving the features of humanitarian appeals and UNDAF, and to enhance cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions.

48. **Mr. Yao** Wenlong (China) welcomed the fact that in the past three years the programmes and funds of the United Nations development system had all made progress in resource mobilization, reforms and field-level coordination. All the core resources had increased to varying degrees; however, the financing goals of each agency were still far from being met. In addition, problems remained in the process of financing, such as resource unpredictability and instability and an increasing imbalance between core and non-core resources. All agencies in the United Nations development system therefore needed to continue their efforts to mobilize more resources, especially core resources, so as to offer greater financial support to developing countries in their endeavour to realize the Millennium Development Goals on time.

49. Since the timetable for meeting the goals ended in 2015, the pace of conducting operational activities should be accelerated. The international community should strengthen cooperation and establish development partnerships based on mutual trust, mutual benefit and mutual help. The developed countries should continue to fulfil their commitments, while the developing countries should continue to enhance national-level efforts, expand the scope of cooperation and trade among themselves, absorb more foreign direct investment, enhance national capacity-building and eradicate poverty through national economic development. China wished to encourage the agencies of the United Nations development system to increase development resources and to formulate

financing strategies and specific programmes which would help developing countries to meet their financing needs for achieving the Goals. The agency should also take advantage of the General Assembly's review of implementation of the Goals in 2005 further to mobilize the political will of donor countries and turn commitments into concrete actions.

50. There had been marked progress in the reforms of the United Nations development system. The people-centred approach to development had been pursued and efforts had been made to focus on participation, reduce disparities and respect diversity. In the simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures, at regular inter-agency meetings, each agency had made full use of its comparative advantages and jointly formulated programmes to avoid wasteful duplication and competition for resources, thereby reducing unnecessary burdens on the programme countries. The resident coordinator system had also been strengthened. China welcomed the momentum achieved in the reform process. It believed that better field-level coordination would facilitate follow-up actions in respect of the major United Nations conferences and summits and a unified and coordinated response by the United Nations development system to priority requests from programme countries. China hoped that the programmes and funds of the United Nations development system would continue their efforts to expand financing input, extend reform and reinforce the simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures.

51. **Mr. Løvald** (Norway) said that the paper on reform of United Nations operational activities presented to the Secretary-General by Norway and six other major donor countries last June was the basis for his address.

52. Clear guiding principles would be essential to improving the effectiveness of the United Nations operational system. Accordingly, the Secretary-General's report should have included more specific targets, benchmarks and time limits for the purpose of monitoring progress. While the United Nations had progressed in establishing a more effective and unified presence at the country level, the aim during the triennial comprehensive policy review was to agree on action to make the United Nations better coordinated and more effective. The 2005 Summit must put the United Nations in a better position to deliver results in line with the Millennium Development Goals. Norway welcomed the recent "Action Two" initiative by the United Nations to strengthen human rights action at the country level. Regarding the strengthening of country's institutional capacities, the triennial comprehensive policy review should produce specific recommendations for making capacity-building programmes more effective.

53. One of the prerequisites for an efficient and coordinated United Nations presence at the country level was a strong United Nations country team headed by a resident coordinator. The triennial comprehensive policy review should state how the system should be funded and indicate how the resources, authority and accountability of the resident coordinator should be strengthened. In some cases resident coordinators might be relieved of their role as head of a UNDP country office. Resident coordinators must ensure cohesion and assist all agencies including non-resident ones.

54. Under the Monterrey Consensus nations had committed themselves to increasing the volume of development aid assistance. Harmonization and reform of the aid system was needed in order to ensure that spending increases reached the neediest and to free resources for programme purposes. At the country level the United Nations should demonstrate flexibility in accordance with local needs and as agreed by the local authorities. A strong field presence should be maintained, but in an integrated structure, and should include experts in areas prioritized by the local government. Agencies with more limited operations could in many cases be represented by other agencies. In some countries administrative costs were higher than spending on poverty reductions. However, one positive step was the recent representation agreement between UNIDO and UNDP. The United Nations needed to see more examples along the lines of the progress registered in post-conflict situations, which included joint analytical frameworks, multi-donor trust funds, and the introduction of a lead agency role for delegated cooperation. UNDAF should serve both as a means for harmonizing programme cycles and ensuring alignment with national strategies, and also as a framework for creating joint programming and pooling of resources. UNDG could be the driving force in the efforts to achieve simplification and harmonization over the next three years. In addition to internal streamlining, the United Nations must become part of the new aid practices, which meant supporting and

adjusting to the changes occurring in the field under the leadership of partner countries.

55. In terms of governance, streamlining was also called for, and in that regard joint sessions of governing bodies should be given the authority to make formal decisions on the basis of their own deliberations and the reports they received.

56. Measures should be carried out to ensure full compliance with gender mainstreaming policy at all levels of the United Nations system.

57. Norway remained a staunch supporter of the United Nations, a fact underscored by its being the fifth largest donor to the United Nations development activities in absolute terms. It believed that the United Nations should play a key role in operational activities in the years to come, and it was therefore concerned by the trend towards marginalization of the organization. Visible reforms could remedy the situation, and he hoped that the triennial comprehensive policy review would increase awareness of the urgent need for action.

58. **Mr. Karanja** (Kenya) said that the values and characteristics of the United Nations development system — based on the principles of universality, multilateralism, neutrality and flexibility — had made the United Nations an impartial and reliable partner for developing countries, and United Nations development support in the form of grants had served to make developing countries view the United Nations positively. Those principles and values should be preserved by increasing the quality and quantity of core resources available to the system, and development cooperation should be aligned with the priorities of recipient countries.

59. Regrettably, the funding of United Nations development cooperation was still low and depended on a small donor base. Moreover, the report of the Secretary-General (A/59/85, para. 37) noted that the majority of specialized agencies depended on voluntary funds, most of which were earmarked and reflected donor preferences rather than national priorities. It was essential that the funding modalities for operational activities for development should be reviewed. The current annual voluntary funding had proved to be unstable and unpredictable, and it failed to include long-term development planning needs. Thus a multi-year funding mechanism for the system was needed, and the importance of core resources must be emphasized. The United Nations Pledging Conference had outlived its usefulness and should be replaced or substantially reformed. His delegation hoped that that issue would be addressed during the current session.

60. Kenya praised the efforts by the United Nations system to improve coherence and coordination. Positive initiatives in that respect were the programming tools adopted by the system, such as the CCA and UNDAF, as well as the coordination efforts of UNDG. To avoid duplication and wastage, better coordination and cooperation were needed at headquarters and in the field.

61. The United Nations system field structure should be reviewed to ensure that human resources had the most effective impact at the national level. It was regrettable that most United Nations agencies did not have country offices, which meant they could not participate effectively in national coordination mechanisms. Human resources within the system should be reassigned to ensure optimum use and reduce duplication and waste. The CCA/UNDAF process should be aligned to national and regional priorities and development frameworks and initiatives to ensure effective participation and leadership by recipient Governments. The involvement of all United Nations agencies, international and regional financial institutions and regional commissions should be strengthened and national capacity and expertise should also be enhanced to ensure the effectiveness of national Governments. Kenya welcomed recent reforms aimed at simplification and harmonization which, if pursued effectively, could bring about streamlining, and in turn would reduce costs. His delegation appreciated the selection of Kenya as one of the pilot countries for the simplification and harmonization process.

62. He thanked the United Nations system and bilateral donors for their prompt response during the current severe famine in Kenya. At the same time, he emphasized the important link between relief and development and suggested that assistance should have inbuilt long-term development support and strategies aimed at preventing such crises and promoting sustainable development.

63. **Mr. Ahmed Chowdhury** (Bangladesh) said that the current policy review provided an opportunity to assess the overall activities of the United Nations system at the country level. Unfortunately, while the role of the United Nations system was to strengthen

national capacity to help countries achieve sustainable development, current trends in funding threatened to undermine the United Nations role in development, making it difficult for developing countries to meet their commitments under the Millennium Declaration. Therefore, proposals for new and innovative financial mechanisms merited serious consideration.

64. Coordination and harmonization efforts should include mechanisms to channel resources for country development through a single agency, which would be cost-effective on the ground. Joint programming at the field level had great potential for delivering assistance and formulating a comprehensive development approach. Proper monitoring and evaluation of United Nations activities would enhance their effectiveness. The resident coordinator system should have a powerful country office and a single development strategy with shared objectives, attributes that were currently lacking. Undue competition for extrabudgetary resources thwarted inter-agency collaboration and cooperation. With regard to the Millennium Development Goals, clear linkages should be established between them and national priorities. Improved synergies at the national level could, for example, help meet the new and growing challenges of poverty and HIV/AIDS.

65. **Mr. Anwarul Chowdhury** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) said that the field presence of the United Nations and their respective mandates were the key to the implementation of the Brussels, Barbados and Almaty Programmes of Action.

66. The implementation of the recommendations of the triennial comprehensive policy review would go a long way in helping significantly to fulfil the mandates and responsibilities of his Office. In accordance with its mandate, his Office had already taken steps to work closely with United Nations agencies and other entities to mainstream the Brussels Programme of Action into the respective spheres of activities. To date, 19 United Nations system entities and other multilateral organizations had mainstreamed the Brussels Programme in their own work programmes. His Office was also undertaking close consultations with the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, civil society, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and other relevant regional and multilateral bodies towards supporting implementation of the programme.

67. His Office collaborated closely with the delegations of least developed countries in New York in order to encourage the creation of national mechanisms and national focal points in these countries to enhance their ownership and capacity for country-level implementation of the Brussels Programme. Currently the number of focal points has increased from 9 to 45 and of national forums from 9 to 18 compared to 2003. While carrying out its tasks, his Office had found that a great need existed for improved cooperation and understanding at the national level. Among its other activities, his Office had organized a "Workshop of the National Focal Points on the Implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries" in May 2004 in New York.

68. Regarding the urgent need to make progress in fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals for the least developed countries, he said that success in that respect depended on the Brussels, Barbados and Almaty programmes because they dealt with the specific measures necessary to overcome the handicaps of those countries. His Office emphasized that it was essential for least developed country programmes to devise special measures in their national development plans for the fulfilment of the seven commitments of the Brussels Programme of Action. Each of those commitments had to be addressed in both the national development programme and the UNDAF, CCA and PRSP, as relevant. The United Nations resident coordinator system needed an inbuilt mechanism to monitor the progress or lack thereof on these commitments. That would provide headquarters offices with the requisite national-level perspective needed for its advocacy and coordination efforts to mobilize international support on behalf of least developed countries.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.